



**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS**  
**GREG ABBOTT**

November 9, 2004

Mr. Chris Settle  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Dallas  
Criminal Law and Police Division  
1400 South Lamar  
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2004-9556

Dear Mr. Settle:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 213015.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to offense report numbers 608420-N and 608549-N. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Section 552.101 encompasses information that is protected from disclosure by other statutes. Chapter 261 of the Family Code is applicable to information used or developed in reports and investigations of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect. Section 261.201 provides in part:

(a) The following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201. You assert that report no. 608549-N pertains to an injury to a child and is therefore confidential pursuant to section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. Upon review of the information, we conclude that report no. 608549-N falls within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. Therefore, the department may withhold report no. 608549-N under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. However, report no. 608420-N pertains to an assault of an adult. *See* Fam. Code § 101.003(a) (defining a child for purposes of chapter 261 investigations as a “person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes”). Therefore, we find that report no. 608420-N does not constitute a working paper used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261. Accordingly, the department may not withhold report no. 608420-N under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code, and it must be released to the requestor.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov’t Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records

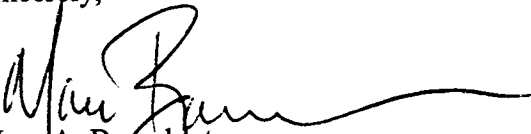
will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Marc A. Barenblat  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MAB/jh

Ref: ID# 213015

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Gaspar Mascorro  
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Dallas, Texas 75208  
(w/o enclosures)